

Direct Marketer Uses Product Information Management Solution for enabling Multi-Channel Retailing

CASE STUDY



The Problem

For the nation's oldest multi-channel direct marketing retailer, having accurate product data in a timely fashion is a critical business function. Inaccurate or "Dirty" data means lost revenues and a decrease in profit margin. Recently, the company decided to take a closer look at the product data inefficiencies in its Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system and other legacy systems.

Product data was being stored in several different locations including the ERP system, inventory management system as well as their home-grown content management system. Multiple inefficient processes existed to handle the flow of product data from the disparate sources to the subscribers. The subscribers included the corporate website, print management system and the data warehouse. The disparate sources were also leading to duplication of data and the lack of a single "source of truth" for product data across the enterprise. The lack of a consistent process was also placing a tremendous burden on the application integration architecture. Implementing SOA in such an environment would be a nightmare.

In order to meet the needed product data quality standards and processes, they soon realized a single-source solution could give them the efficiencies they needed.

Vendor Selection Process

The company decided on implementing a PIM solution to meet the challenges outlined above. The company needed a PIM solution provider that had a best of breed solution as well as understood the critical needs of "retailers." The company selected Riversand Technologies to provide them with the most advanced single-source Product Information Management (PIM) solution available on the market. Some of the key distinguishing features of the Riversand Product are:

- Ability to model and extend the various product data elements needed for a retailer
- Ability to handle complex promotions
- Unique denormalization process that allows for mass updates of product data with the simultaneous near real-time data exports for the subscribers. This is a key feature as all retailers demand that the latest and most up-to-date product data is reflected on their key customer touch-points such as web catalogs and printed media.

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Riversand ProductCenter Implementation

Riversand began the implementation by refining the current data in the company's multiple systems, and helping them store and manage the data effectively in the Riversand ProductCenter environment.

Some of the key features that were implemented are:

- **Product Master catalog and Multiple Subset catalogs:** Each subset catalog represented the needs for a particular customer segment. Data is being re-used effectively between the master and subset catalogs.
- **Product Variants:** Each product can be "exploded" into multiple SKU's based on multiple source attributes such as size, color or pattern. This feature is called SKU explosion.
- **Web Groupings:** Dynamic grouping of Products across multiple categories based on a theme such as Dora Bedroom Set.
- **Promotions Management:** Manage Product Bundling, Kits, Cross-Sells and Clearance

For this company, the Riversand solution handles close to ten inbound feeds and close to twenty outbound feeds. These feeds involve millions of products, relationships and attributes. The Riversand solution computes the data for a particular outbound feed based on a complex delta algorithm. Furthermore, the Riversand solution has an in-built denormalization process that can scale to millions of products and ensures that all data within the solution can be accessed in a fast, real time fashion for reporting and syndication needs.

This handles the twin requirements for vast vendor data updates and near real-time product data synchronization to the subscribers such as Corporate Websites and Print Media. The Riversand solution also validates each and every piece of data flowing through the system to ensure data accuracy.

Benefits to Company

Riversand was able to provide the single "source of truth" application that simplified product data management processes across the enterprise. Riversand was also able to resolve this direct marketer's complex integration problems with their advanced PIM solution.

Some of the key benefits are:

- **Faster Data Availability:** Data synchronization to subscriber systems is happening every 5 minutes as opposed to once a day/week before. This leads to more up-to-date product data for the various end customer touchpoints. This is a key competitive benefit for a retailer as they can "rush" new products and product updates "faster" to their end customers.
- **Consistent Product Branding:** As the Riversand solution becomes the single "source of truth," all customer channel have the same consistent product data. This leads to a better and more consistent product branding. It improves customer support processes.
- **Accurate Product Data:** As the product data becomes more accurate, there will be fewer invoice errors leading to higher profits and better customer loyalty.

ABOUT US

Riversand Technologies Inc. is a global leader in Product Information Management (PIM) and Product Master Data Management (pMDM) Solutions. Serving industries such as Manufacturing, Distribution, Oil & Gas and Retail, our PIM solution enables the creation of accurate product master data records for the purpose of synchronization across various enterprise systems in a timely fashion. Our solution can be implemented for various initiatives such as Product Master Data Management, Multi-Channel Retailing and eProcurement Cataloging. Our PIM solution easily scales to millions of items and thousands of attributes.

Headquartered in Houston, TX, it has 4 offices and over 100 employees worldwide.

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